

Helping NH Schools and School Boards Create the Future

The year 2019 marks the 15th year New Hampshire School Boards Association (NHSBA) has been providing Strategic Planning Services to School Districts in NH. Over the years, this process has brought together hundreds of dedicated students, parents, teachers, Superintendents, Principals and community members committed to improving student learning by setting a future direction for thousands of NH students and staff members.

At its core, Strategic Planning is a process to:

1. Open up a dialogue about a desired future state
2. Assess the school district's direction in response to a changing world and adjust as needed
3. Set priorities, and focus energy and resources on supporting student learning
4. Document these priorities in a plan, that will facilitate communication and building a shared understanding among all stakeholders

Strategic Planning services support school districts in the development of one, three and five year goals. However, Strategic Planning is more than writing a carefully worded Mission statement or an inspiring Vision statement. It is a process that enables school districts to influence the future by identifying and setting in motion deliberate, forward thinking action plans.

Our process combines concepts from the world of Innovation Design using Student Empathy mapping and Community Listening sessions. It also uses the science of Appreciative Inquiry to bring a strengths based approach to planning allowing the best of what is working now to be a foundation and catalyst for future initiatives. Over the years, NHSBAs process has shifted its approach to strategy development and has embraced these basic tenets of Appreciative Inquiry:

1. What you seek, you find more of – The more positive and inspiring the strategy development process, the more innovative ideas that will be created and possibilities that can be explored
2. People commit to what they help to create – The more participative the plan creation, the more committed people will be to implementation success

Traditional strategic planning sets out to identify problems to solve and looks at weaknesses and how to overcome them. It ignores the very things that are working well within school districts. Our process changes the questions from “What is not working well?” to “What are we trying to create?”

The world and job markets are changing at a rapid pace, so waiting to see what happens and hope our students are prepared for these changes, is a risky approach. Strategic planning is a creative process. Experience the success that comes from thinking ahead and creating a compelling future for your school. Contact NHSBA today for more information.